

Addendum to Minutes of the Meeting of the Council of the
National Academy of Sciences on February 8, 1958

Resolutions Adopted by the Council
of the National Academy of Sciences
February 8, 1958

The launching of IGY satellites has opened space to exploration. Accordingly, attempts to reach the moon and planets can be anticipated, with reasonable confidence, within the foreseeable future.

The National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America urges that scientists plan lunar and planetary studies with great care and deep concern so that initial operations do not compromise and make impossible forever after critical scientific experiments. For example, biological or radioactive contamination of extraterrestrial objects could easily occur unless initial space activities be carefully planned and conducted with extreme care.

The National Academy of Sciences will endeavor to plan lunar or planetary experiments in which the Academy participates so as to prevent contamination of celestial objects in a way that would impair the unique and powerful scientific opportunities that might be realized in subsequent scientific exploration.

The Council of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America urges the International Council of Scientific Unions to encourage and assist the evaluation of possibilities of such contamination and the development of means for its prevention. The Council of the Academy also requests the International Council of Scientific Unions to do whatever else it may to preserve and foster the unaffected potentialities of space research.

* * * * *

Subsequent to this resolution, Professor M. Florkin, Laboratoires de Biochimie, Universite de Liege, was asked to convene an international "Committee on Contamination by Extra-Terrestrial EXploration" which is about to meet at The Hague.

According to a letter from Professor Florkin, the committee will include delegates from France, Germany, USSR, US, United Kingdom, Switzerland and Belgium.